

LESSON 6

The Importance of Being Born Again

GOD'S PLAN FOR GETTING TO HEAVEN

Jesus said ... *Except a man be born again (spiritually), he cannot see the kingdom of God (heaven),* John 3:3. We are born a two part being (just body & soul) spiritually dead. **Illus:** In the same way we've all had a place and time when we were born physically, we must have a time when we are *born again* spiritually.

STEPS TO BEING BORN AGAIN

A. We are not automatically Christians /Born Again /Converted /Saved.

Jesus said, *Except ye be converted... ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven* (Matt 18:3). No one has "always been a Christian." John 1:12 *But as many as received him (Christ), to them gave he power to become the sons (children) of God.*

There is a "before and after." **Illus:** body building pictures. The Bible is full of examples of conversions (Zacchaeus, Matthew, Nicodemus, Pentecost converts, Paul, prison guard, Cornelius, Rabbi Crispus, etc). 2 Cor 5:17, *Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.* (Pivotal point of life).

B. We must recognize our sinfulness

Illus: The Pharisee and tax collector, Lu 18:10)... Romans 3:10 says, *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...* Isaiah 64:6, *But we are all as an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags...* Most people fail to see themselves as serious sinners. They feel they are a "good person." They are comparing themselves to others, instead of God's standard; the 10 Commandments. Let's see how you rate compared to the 10 Commandments.

THE 10 COMMANDMENTS:

#1 Thou shalt have no other gods before me (Exodus 20:3)

No one can claim they have never put anything ahead of God (money, career, own self centered goals, pleasure, sports, entertainment, sin, vice, a relationship with another, etc).

#2 Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image (of God) (Exodus 20:4)

Many have been guilty of inventing a *God of their own imagination* and liking... a God who 'suits them.' People want a "God that overlooks sin and takes everyone to heaven." They have improvised and *dreamed up* a God of their *own image*.

#3 Thou shalt not take the name of the LORD thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain (Exodus 20:7)

Re-read that carefully. God is keeping record of every time you've used His name as a curse word and you will answer for it one day.

#4 Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy (Exodus 20:8)

Have you always honored the Lord's Day or been faithful in church attendance? (Heb 10:25)

#5 Honour thy father and thy mother (Exodus 20:12)

Have you ever disrespected or disobeyed your parents. Have you ever argued with them or dishonored them?

#6 Thou shalt not kill (Exodus 20:13)

Although most people have never committed murder, they are guilty of "murder of the heart." Jesus clarifies this commandment in Matthew 5:21-2; *Whosoever shall kill, shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother... shall be in danger of hell fire.* Have you ever been mad or bitter at someone?

#7 Thou shalt not commit adultery (Exodus 20:14)

While many have never committed adultery, Jesus said; *Thou shalt not commit adultery: But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart* (Matt 5:27-8). Have you ever lusted after the opposite sex? This is adultery of the heart according to Jesus.

#8 Thou shalt not steal (Exodus 20:15)

Who could claim they've never taken anything that doesn't belong to them? ...something small or even the boss's time?

#9 Thou shalt not bear false witness (Exodus 20:16)

No one could honestly claim they have never told a lie!

#10 Thou shalt not covet (Exodus 20:17)

Have you ever desired anything you didn't have or didn't need? Have you ever been discontented or ungrateful?

Most people are guilty of breaking all 10 commandments! Many places in the Bible reveal that liars, adulterers, thieves, the covetous, etc will *spend eternity in hell!* (Rev 21:8, I Cor 6:9-10, Gal 5:19-21). ***How could you ever expect to get to heaven by "living a good life?"*** Romans 3:10 *As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one...*Romans 3:23 *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God; **Sin has a penalty**... Romans 6:23 For the wages of sin is death (Hell).*

C. We cannot possibly get to heaven by keeping the law, (10 Commandments)

The law was given by God to show us how much we need forgiveness by accepting the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross for our sins. The Bible says, *The law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith* (Galatians 3:24). We are condemned on our own, and need a Savior! Once we recognize this, we are 'qualified' to be saved. Jesus said, *The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost* (Lu 19:10). We must see ourselves as lost. This is the **key** to being born again!

D. Many foolishly attempt to make themselves acceptable to God by their works.

In Rom. 10:1-3, Paul says, *I bear them record that they have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge (Bible truth). For they ...going about to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted themselves unto the righteousness of God (the sacrifice of Jesus on Calvary). Trying to work your way to heaven is an insult to God. Illus: Tuxedo on hog.*

Jesus said, *Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not ...in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity (Matt 7:22-3). Sadly they were trusting in their own goodness and works instead of the sacrifice of Jesus for our sins.*

E. Jesus is our substitute sacrifice for sin.

The Bible says, *Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures (I Cor. 15:3). Jesus paid for our sin (hell) on the cross.*

F. We cannot be born again by earning it.

Titus 3:5 says, *Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast. All your faith must be in Jesus Christ 100%.*

G. Getting to heaven cannot be by both grace and works.

Rom. 11:6 says, *And if by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified (saved) by faith without the deeds of the law (Rom 3:28).*

Any verses in the Bible eluding to doing *good works* are always addressed to an already born again Christian, encouraging him to faithfully serve the Lord **after** being saved! Titus 3:8, *They which have believed in God might be careful to maintain good works.*

H. Baptism has nothing to do with getting us to heaven.

In fact St. Paul said, *Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the gospel, (I Cor. 1:17). The Thief on the cross went to heaven without ever being baptized. You won't find a baby baptized in the Bible, nor anyone else before being born again. However, after someone has been saved, they should follow the example of Jesus by being baptized (immersed) in a true Bible practicing church. But remember, we are saved by the **blood** of Christ, not the water of the baptistery. Ephesians 1:7 says, *We have redemption through his (Jesus) blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace (a favor from God).**

Rom 5:9-10 says, *Being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him (Jesus). When we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his Son. Romans 5:1 says, *Therefore being justified by faith (in His blood), we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. (Continued in the final lesson) Questions?**